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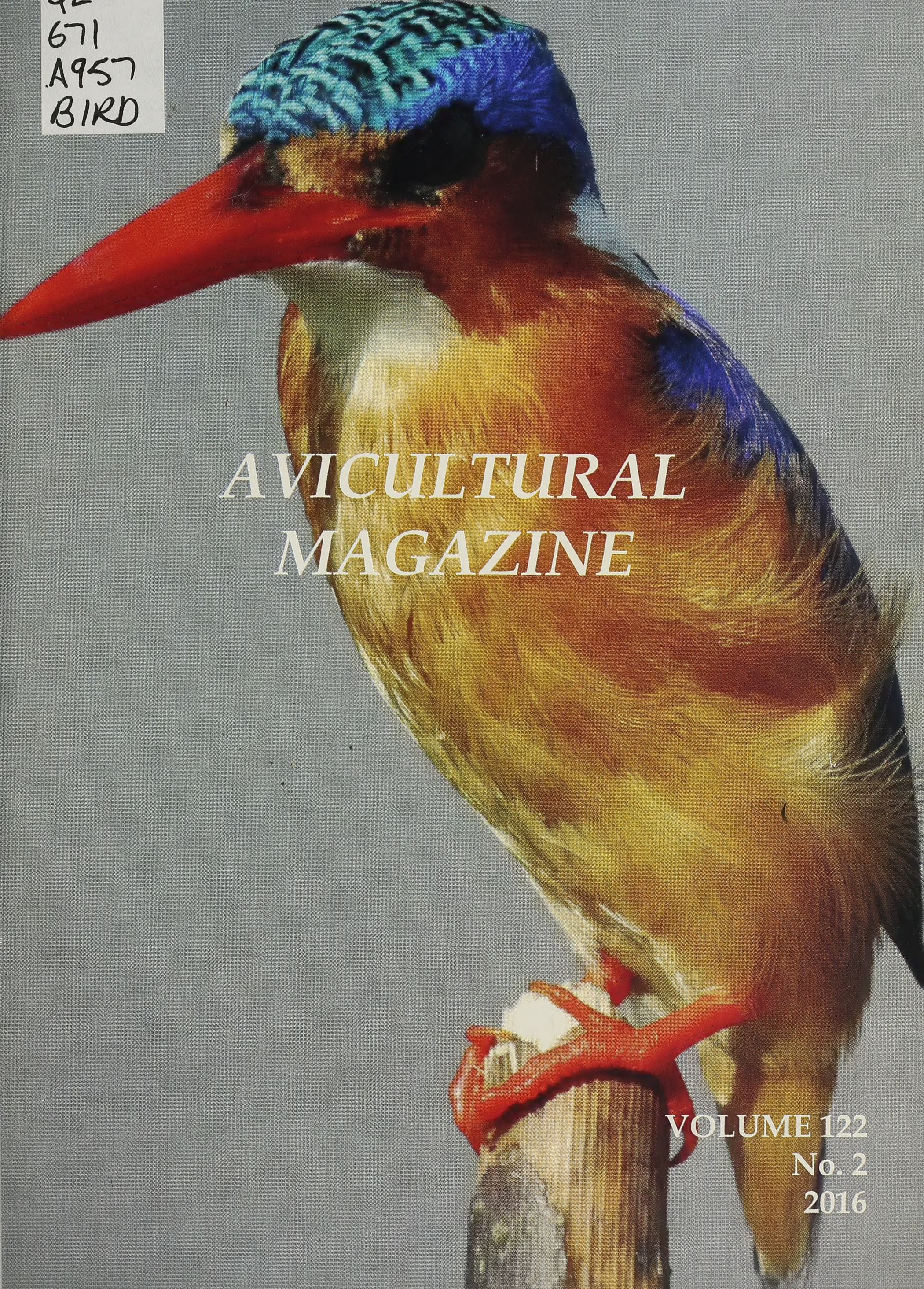

AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE

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THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Avicultural Society was founded in 1894 for the study of British and foreign birds in the wild and in captivity. The Society is international in character, having members throughout the world.

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The AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE welcomes articles and news items from both members and non-members (no payment is made). These can be about any aspect of aviculture, conservation or natural history concerning non-domesticated bird species that are likely to be of interest to aviculturists. Articles submitted for publication should preferably not have been published elsewhere and should ideally be written in English, though translation is possible. Scientific as well as vernacular bird names should be given, and references cited in the text should be listed at the end of the article. Material can be sent as an email attachment to editor@avisoc.co.uk and can be accepted in most common file formats. Files on disk and typed or handwritten manuscripts are also accepted. Line drawings, black and white or colour photographs can be used to illustrate articles and should be clearly captioned. Tables and graphs submitted will be used whenever possible. Graphs should ideally be accompanied by the relevant source data. Please notify the editor if you do not wish your email address to accompany your article.

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AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE

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IN THE WILD AND CAPTIVITY

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AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE

THE JOURNAL OF THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I write this on returning from the Society's summer party. Thirty members and guests enjoyed the excellent collection at Birdworld, where curator Duncan Bolton, also a member, answered questions over tea and spoke about some of the conservation projects that the Park is involved with. These include the reintroduction of Great Bustards to southern England, which has been much more successful recently following the importation of eggs from Spain, with several free-living females rearing chicks in Hampshire this year.

Duncan also spoke about his work with African Penguins. These are the star species in a new walk-through enclosure at Birdworld, and Duncan will be travelling to South Africa in July to continue his ongoing involvement in the fieldwork projects which are successfully boosting and monitoring the wild population.

By the time you read this, applications will have closed for this year's Raymond Sawyer Scholarship, and Laura Gardner and Philip Schofield, along with colleagues from Cage & Aviary Birds and Durrell, will be deciding on the successful candidate who will attend a specialist incubation course in Jersey this autumn.

Our next meeting is the Autumn Social Meeting on September 10th and 11th, starting with a visit to Bristol Zoo, and possibly also to Wild Place, the Zoo's new attraction just outside the city, on Saturday 10th, followed by a visit to The International Centre for Birds of Prey near Newent in Gloucestershire on Sunday 11th. Booking details will be available soon.

We have now confirmed the date for the 2017 AGM, which will be held on Saturday March 25th. This will again be held at Cotswold Wildlife Park in conjunction with the International Turaco Society, and we plan to include a visit to another local collection on Sunday 26th.

Twenty-five members are looking forward to a long weekend in Ireland from September 23rd-26th. The official closing date for this trip has passed, but we will accommodate late bookings if at all possible, please contact Becci Marshall at Howard Travel on 01225 777227, or becci@howard travel.com.

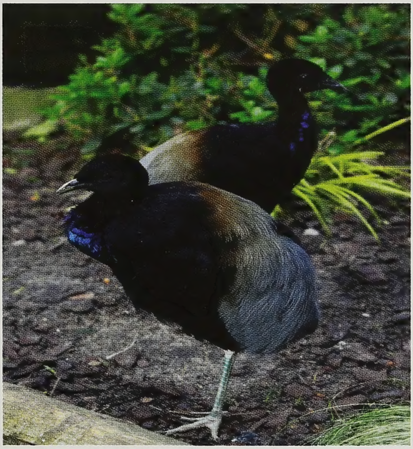
Nigel Hewston

TRUMPETERS *Psophia spp* – AMBASSADORS OF THE RAINFOREST AT WELTVOGELPARK WALSRODE

By Dr. Antje Mewes (*antje.mewes@weltvogelpark.de*),
Andreas Frei, Jan Dams & Gerardus Scheres

It is an unforgettable and unique experience to walk through a rainforest. Everywhere - as far as the eye can see - it is green. The foliage from 40-metre-high trees forms a closed canopy through which only a little sunlight can pass to the ground. Despite the shadow, a temperature of 30°C and a humidity of almost 90% causes an unbearably sticky heat. Amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals produce a real jungle concert of penetrating exotic sounds. The rainforest is the most diverse and fascinating habitat of the world. It reaches around the equator, but the biggest of all the rainforests is the Amazonas in South America.

Especially at dusk and dawn, a very unusual, vibrating sound melts into the loud jungle-concert: *Oh-oh-oh-oh-oooooh*. These are the deep, trumpet-like sounds of birds called trumpeters, with which they mark their territory. The sounds are produced, with beak closed, in the air sacs of the respiratory system which is similar to a pressure system. The sound resembles that produced by blowing into an empty bottle (Sick 1993).



Grey-winged Trumpeters

Trumpeters spend the night sheltered in trees. In the morning they leave their roosting places and flutter from the branches of the trees down to the shady ground. With their short, rounded wings they are anything but good acrobats of the air! During daytime, when no danger is threatening them, trumpeters prefer to stay on the ground. Here they walk in groups of 3-15 individuals, elegant and graceful throughout their territory, which can reach a size of up to 88 ha. Such a large territory is necessary to enable them to find sufficient fruits, seeds and insects. The group is organized into a strict hierarchy and led by the most experienced individual. Lower-ranking birds act submissively towards higher-ranking birds. They spread their wings, duck down and produce loud, high pitched tweeting sound, a surprising behaviour that resembles the one made by young chicks. The high-ranking bird reinforces its dominance by repeatedly snapping its wings upwards. If lower-ranking birds can reach a higher rank in another group, it may happen that they leave their own group and join the new one. Often young birds transfer groups when reaching maturity at an age of one to two years. This happens mostly during territorial fights.

A Trumpeter enjoying the sun

Trumpeters defend their territory very aggressively to secure a large area which is needed to provide enough food for all of the group members. During territorial fights, the task of the females and juveniles is to call as loudly and impressively as possible. Meanwhile, the males fight against, and chase away, the individuals of the challenging group. At the same time low-ranking birds take the chance to join the rival group. For males this is, in general, much easier than for the females. The new group readily accepts the males, because they are useful for territorial fights. Furthermore, trumpeters practice polyandry; only the highest ranking female mates with several males. All group members, however, incubate the eggs and help to rear the chicks. In the animal kingdom this strategy is very rare. During the mating period several males compete for the attention of the highest ranking female. Spectacular courtship dances take place in which the birds display their plumage and perform impressive dances. In general, the female will copulate with a specific male more frequently the higher its rank within the group. Afterwards, the breeding nest hole is chosen very carefully. It is located approximately 10-15 metres above the ground, in a sheltered area within a tree trunk. Here, 2-4 eggs are laid at two day intervals and subsequently incubated for a maximum of 29 days.

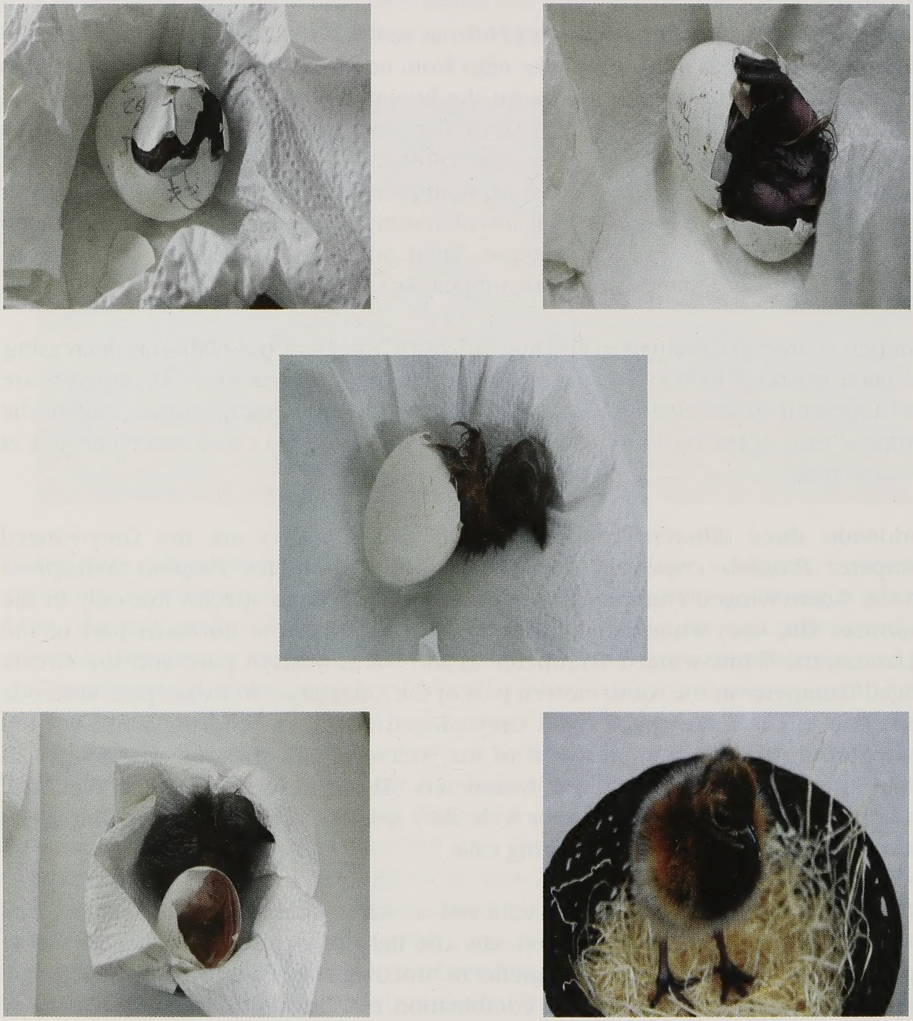
One day after hatching, the pretty chicks leave their nest and walk around with the group. With their reddish-brown downy plumage, they strongly resemble young crane chicks. The similar appearance reflects the close relationship with cranes. For three weeks, all the group members lovingly care for the chicks. They feed and protect them from dangers such as snakes and ocelots. The social behaviour of trumpeters is not only reflected in the joint rearing of the chicks, but also by their tender, mutual preening. Feather care is practised by single individuals even with their eyes closed. Trumpeters were also already observed playing, bathing and sunbathing in pairs.

Their incredibly fascinating social way of life has enabled Amazonas' indigenous people to keep trumpeters as pets. They take eggs from nests and incubate them with hens in their villages. Trumpeters then accept the human people as their own group and become extremely tame. They even show the same submissive behaviour towards humans which can be observed in the wild. Often trumpeters are kept as "guard dogs" together with domestic fowls. They warn of imminent danger, caused by strangers or dangerous animals, with loud shrilling and penetrating calls. As "sheepdogs" they keep whole animal herds together by chasing escaped animals back to the herd. They even take over the job as a "nanny" by protecting native children while playing.

Trumpeters are not classified as endangered. However their population is decreasing. The main reason is habitat loss caused by continuous deforestation. Trumpeters are also hunted for their delicious meat. In a very devious way, many hunters imitate the territorial calls of the birds, which enable them to locate and catch several groups at the same time.

Worldwide, three different trumpeter species exist. They are the Grey-winged Trumpeter *Psophia crepitans*, the White-winged Trumpeter *Psophia leucoptera* and the Green-winged Trumpeter *Psophia viridis*. All three species live only in the Amazonas. The Grey-winged Trumpeter is widespread in the northern part of the Amazonas, the White-winged Trumpeter in the south-western part, and the Green-winged Trumpeter in the south-eastern part of the Amazonas. Weltvogelpark Walsrode keeps two of the three species: the Grey-winged Trumpeter and the White-winged Trumpeter. In the big rainforest hall of the Weltvogelpark Walsrode visitors get an insight into the fascinating world of trumpeters. Living in authentic tropical climate conditions with a humidity of about 85%, they get the chance to watch the social behaviour and listen to their fascinating calls.

Last year, Weltvogelpark Walsrode achieved a very special breeding success: 22 juvenile Grey-winged Trumpeters first saw the light of day at Walsrode. The most important groundwork to such a magnificent breeding success is of course keeping a harmonious breeding pair. The pair combination, but also the subsequent rearing of chicks, requires great husbandry and was, under the supervision of Andreas Frei and Jan Dams, veterinary and biologist of Weltvogelpark Walsrode, perfectly administered by the hand rearing-team. It was one male trumpeter, which had already fertilized eggs in the previous year at the young age of only 10 months. This was his first clutch, he also ensured the following year that numerous eggs were fertilized. The clutches each contain 4-5 eggs. They were exchanged with artificial eggs and incubated in a forced air incubator. The artificial eggs were unfortunately not incubated by the parent, so eggs could not be put back under them as had originally been planned. Nevertheless, a very high hatch rate was achieved due to the meticulous weight check and respective humidity adjustment within the incubator.



A sequence of a Trumpeter chick hatching

Hatched chicks have a weight of about 40g. 30-40 cm high boxes are used in which the chicks are placed separately, this prevents the fast developing precocial birds from jumping out. To make sure that the chicks have an optimal surface, the hand rearing-team filled the boxes with cardboard and firmly pressed wood shavings. Ceramic dark emitter infra-red lamps provide the necessary warmth. From the first day, the young chicks are socialized with an equally young domestic fowl chick. This companion will prevent the young trumpeters from imprinting on humans and they also learn from them, like little children learn from their older siblings. They watch carefully how the chicks peck at the ground and by imitating their behaviour they learn much faster how to eat their food independently. Important for the socialization is that the domestic fowl chick and the trumpeter chick are approximately the same age. If the domestic fowl chick is too old, it can be recognized as a competitor resulting in conflicts between the two unequal "siblings".

A Trumpeter chick with its domestic fowl companion

The experienced hand-rearing team invested a lot of time and attention in rearing the chicks. From the second day on they were fed 6-7 times per day every 2-3 hours. To feed the chicks, a porridge of defrosted day-old chicks as well as T20 toucan pellets (from the company Versele Laga) are used. From the third and fourth day onwards, when the chicks start to feed independently from the dish, banana is also fed which is extremely popular with trumpeters. In the following days, additional fruits, like mango and papaya are added. After three weeks, chicks get a little bit of insectivorous food (from Versele Laga) and a so called "fruit pigeon fruit mix", which is prepared by Weltvogelpark Walsrode. This contains chopped apple, blueberries, papaya, boiled carrots, potatoes and beetroot. From the fourth and fifth week onwards, oat flakes, grain feed, soaked hornbill pellets (H16 from Versele Laga), as well as a few white mealworms are fed. After three months, trumpeters are put into groups. The consolidation only works if all the birds are placed in a new aviary at the same time. A later introduction with further individuals does not work because trumpeters see their aviary as their territory and defend it aggressively against any new individuals. Currently the 22 chicks of Weltvogelpark Walsrode are socialized in three different groups. In two years at the latest, the Weltvogelpark team is looking forward to further offspring from them. The aim of this year is to realize the successful natural parent rearing of this species.

A group of juvenile Trumpeters

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BIRD RINGING AS A LIFETIME HOBBY

By Derek G Cotgrave

It seems that birds must be in my blood; being initially infused and enthused by my father who kept Budgerigars *Melopsittacus undulatus* until during WWII when a bomb dropped opposite our house and the next morning we found all the birds dead in the shed. My father went on to keep Racing Pigeons *Columba livia domestica* and in due course, though still at an early age, I started out on what has become a lifetime hobby of ringing birds.

During and just after WWII, with very little by way of television and no such things as computers or mobile 'phones and when few parents owned cars, youngsters passed much of their leisure time outdoors. Many boys sought out birds' eggs to form a "Collection", whilst some eggs (notably those of Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* and Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* were gathered for food. As likely as not, the latter harvesting was to some extent driven by the then strict egg-rationing of just one egg per person per week.

I became friendly with a local naturalist who taught me a lot. As my knowledge and interest grew, I began to wonder where some birds went to and where Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris*, Redwings *Turdus iliacus* and Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla* came from to spend the winter.

I read my weekly copy of *Cage Birds* and just about any book on birds that I could lay my hands on. I found out that ringing birds was a method used to learn their movements, migration routes and life spans. Looking back from today, bird ringing has been carried out in the UK for over a hundred years. Before that time, little was known about where our birds came from, went to, or how long they lived. Indeed, years previously some people believed that Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* hibernated for the winter in mud in reed beds.

I joined the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and applied for a ringing licence. After some correspondence and the provision of references, I was granted my first ringing permit in 1948 - so in 2016, 68 years after I began ringing, I will be applying for my 69th licence.

Initially, I trapped garden birds using primitive home-made traps. The first bird I ever ringed was a European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. After the country settled down following WWII and people had a little more spare time, the number of bird ringers increased and methods of trapping improved. As the years moved on, mist nets became available. These nets of very fine mesh are made in various lengths and have several "shelves" in them. Erected on poles, the nets prove very effective in catching large numbers of birds.

Most of my ringing is carried out within a few miles of my home with (when time allows) trips out to various parts of the country - mainly North Wales. Here is an example of one of my earliest documented trips. On 11 July 1949 (a Monday) I visited Cilan Head on the Lleyn peninsula. Apparently I risked life and limb when climbing on the cliffs to ring young Great Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* in their nests for it has been brought to my attention that 'The exciting sea cliffs of Cilan Head have a fearsome reputation... (for) this area includes some of the most adventurous sea cliff climbing around... (even) some of the cliff top approaches are... tricky and intimidating' [1]. All I can say by way of defence is that I didn't think of danger in those days, for if I could climb to a nest then that was the only thought in my mind - and it still is today!

I remember that during the visit to Cilan Head I also ringed some European Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus*. The outcome for the day was somewhat doubly disappointing, for none of the gulls were recorded later and some of the Great Cormorants were reported from Brittany where they had been shot by fishermen. The BTO magazine British Birds records that four (out of an inferred eleven judging from the ring numbers) Great Cormorants ringed by "D. G. Cotgrave" on 11.7.49 at Cilan Head, Caernarvon, were recovered later that year - showing a clear southerly movement by the young birds [2]. In chronological order of recovery date the returns were:

4.9.49...Larmor-Plage (Morbihan) France, ring no. 129140.
30.9.49...Daoulas (Finistère) France, ring no. 129134.
2.10.49...St. Vaast-la-Hougue (Manche), France, ring no. 129135.
17.12.49...Nantgaredig (Carms.) ring no. 129130.

On another recovery, *British Birds* records a Eurasian Blue Tit *Parus* (now *Cyanistes*) *caeruleus* E.6991 which I ringed on 16.8.49 (a Tuesday) in Heswall, Cheshire, that was recovered on 14.11.49 at Sarn, Caernarvon, some 71 miles (114 km) south-west [3]. By way of comparison, thinking resident/migrant, British Birds reveals that the same day I ringed the Eurasian Blue Tit, a fully-grown Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* was ringed at the Skokholm Bird Observatory. That bird was reported two days later on its migration route at Capbreton, Landes, France [4] - having covered about 600 miles (965 km) in forty-three hours [5].

Barn Swallows are a favourite bird of mine. In 2015 I ringed 200 nestlings. Over the decades (acting alone as I do) I must have ringed a total of nearly two thousand of the species - though I am still waiting for one of *my* Barn Swallows to be reported from overseas! My furthest recovery from overseas is a Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* reported from Russia, having been ringed two years earlier. Within the UK my furthest return is a European Robin that reached Aberdeen. In fact, very few ringed birds (especially the smaller passerines) are ever reported again.

One of the real highlights of my time as an accredited Grade A ringer occurred in February 2003. I had the opportunity to visit Sri Lanka where I had students from the University of Colombo. They were eager to know how to safely remove birds from the mist nets and learn to properly handle the species prior to correctly ringing them with the approved ring-size. During the memorable few days we spent together we caught an amazing number of species; seventy-three forest birds of twenty species and sixteen waders of four species.

The forest birds included, in no particular order of desirability, four Eurasian Hoopoes *Upupa epops*, two Woodpecker species (a single Brown-capped *Dendrocopus nanus* and three Yellow-crowned *D. mahrattensis* (see Fig. A)), two types of Sunbird (three Loten's *Cynniris lotenius* and four Purple-rumped *Leptocoma zeylonica*) together with half-a-dozen each of Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumentorum*, Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* and White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus*. The greatest number of any one species of forest bird ringed was the score of twenty Red-vented Bulbuls *P. cafer* with the perhaps most vividly remembered bird caught being a single Small Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*.

During the same trip, a session to catch the waders became a story in itself. We made a pre-dawn visit to a remote area of marshland and the event became rather animated. After unfurling the mist nets we did not wait in vain, for as the sun rose and the morning developed, we captured and ringed some of the passing birds. In fact, all was going rather well - until quite suddenly, without any warning, our activities were interrupted when a vehicle drew up. The arrival of another vehicle really surprised me because we seemed to be somewhere between the back of beyond and the middle of nowhere. Even more surprisingly, a camera crew emerged from the vehicle! It soon turned out they had been making a film about the birds of Sri Lanka for television and had heard about our activities. The group filmed some of the ringing taking place and I was interviewed. They kindly sent me a tape of their film. Naturally I was keen to hear how my interview had turned out. I was disappointed because they had dubbed over my voice with their own language. For the record, within that single small window of opportunity, we had mist-netted and had three each of Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* and Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (see Fig. B), plus nine Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* and a single Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*.The trip to Sri Lanka remains truly memorable.

Over the years I have had many enjoyable and widespread outings in the UK to ring birds, especially nestlings. Few nests are as easily found as the large individual constructions built by a colony of cliff-nesting Great Cormorants. In my experience finding nests is down to experience! For example, after eventually finding a Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus during the breeding season somewhere on vast open moorland the next challenge is to locate the nest. I have found that Ring Ouzels like to nest near streams, usually in the heather or in the bank side. Similarly, Dippers *Cinclus cinclus* are always close to water and they nest under bridges or in the banks of streams, usually where there is a small waterfall.

Studying a controlled zone, such as catching and ringing birds in my garden, is also very interesting. Over time, the rise and fall in the number of birds and of species ringed can be quite enlightening and puzzling. House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* used to be commonly caught in the garden, yet I have only trapped one in the last two years. No Starlings or Song Thrushes *Turdus philomelos* have been caught in my garden for some considerable time. At the other extreme, ten years ago a European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* was a rare sight in my garden. Then suddenly, the population exploded and many have been ringed every year since. That is until this year, 2015, when the number has dropped by about two-thirds! My European Goldfinch total from nearly 70 years of ringing in garden and country is around 1,400 with a largest year total of 305 achieved in 2011. Incidentally, that same year, 2011, was the year I recorded my highest annual total for all species when I ringed 531 birds.

Overall, I have ringed thousands of birds of a great many species since, for the record, in 1949, I ringed 133 trapped birds and 222 nestlings (including the above-mentioned Cilan Head Cormorants) for a grand total of 355 birds [6].

For anyone interested in birds I would suggest they consider bird ringing as a hobby. It includes many other outdoor activities such as travel, climbing (on cliffs and up trees) and walking. Other gains are the precious opportunities and privilege to handle and examine birds. Subsequent reporting adds to the knowledge of our birds. Speaking personally, I cannot see any point in people just ticking a list of birds seen. Twitchers, apart from their own satisfaction, contribute little or nothing to our knowledge of birds.

To become a bird ringer one has to have a licence issued by the BTO. For this to happen, time must be served under the instruction and guidance of a licensed ringer until sufficient experience has been gained by the candidate to qualify for an individual permit. Information and details can be obtained from British Trust for Ornithology, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, E-mail info@bto.org, Telephone 01842 750050.

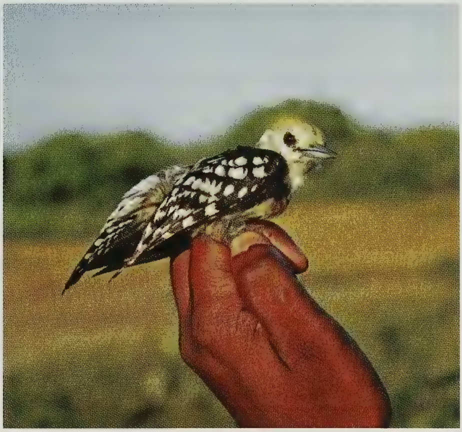

Figure A: Yellow-crowned Woodpecker (female) *Dendrocopus mahrattensis*

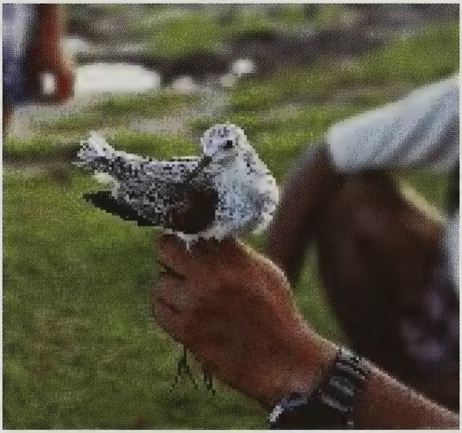

Figure B: Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*, note the very long legs

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CARL LINNAEUS AS AN AVICULTURIST

By Ingvar Svanberg, researcher at Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden.
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Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish scholar in natural history at Uppsala University in the 18th century, became world famous for his establishment of a universally accepted method for the naming of animals and plants. By the introduction of the binominal scientific system that is used by botanists and zoologists all over the world, he made a huge contribution to taxonomy. He is sometimes called the father of taxonomy. Linnaeus is more famous as a botanist than a zoologist, but he also made many pioneering contributions to animal studies. As a professor in Uppsala he also kept several exotic birds at his home that also amused him and his family. I will give a brief account of the birds that he kept and their importance for him and his family.

Background

Linnaeus moved to the village of Råshult in the Swedish province of Småland, Sweden, on 23rd of May 1707. He was already interested in plants from early childhood. His father Nils Linnaeus had a lovely flower-garden with a remarkable amount of plant species. However, his father also kept domestic pigeons, which was still a rare habit among clergymen at that time. The young Linnaeus went as a poor student to Uppsala University in 1728 and studied medicine and natural history.

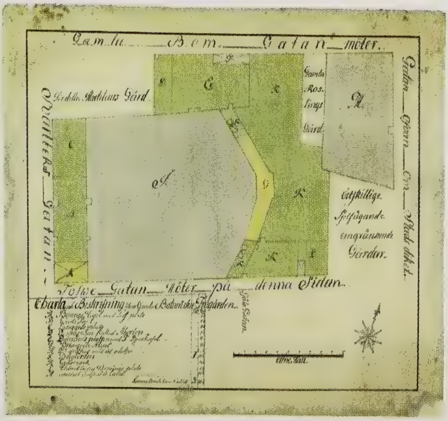
He received a grant and was able to do a tour of Lapland in 1732 that was of great importance for his future fame. As a student in Uppsala he kept many native birds, bought from local bird catchers, in his student room. A friend wrote that Linnaeus' room was "filled with branches and he kept 30 different kinds of tame birds there". Linnaeus himself wrote that he had tits, larks, sparrows, siskins and others in his chamber.

After graduating in Uppsala he went to Harderwijk in the Netherlands to get a doctoral level degree in medicine. This Dutch university was famous for awarding degrees very quickly and he was finished in two weeks. Instead he could focus on networking and improving his trademark in the scientific world at that time. He was also employed as a curator at a private Botanical Garden and menagerie owned by George Clifford (1685 -1760), director of the Dutch East India Company. The menagerie had many exotic animals, among them many birds. Linnaeus became well acquainted with parrots and other exotic birds in that way. He returned to Sweden in 1738, becoming a physician in Stockholm. During his year in Stockholm he also kept birds at his home. He actually described his Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* which he kept in a cage. The Stockholm bird-dealers marketed the beautiful white birds with black backs as "birds of paradise".

In 1741 the 34 year old Linnaeus was appointed Professor at Uppsala University and soon he also became responsible for the Botanical Garden (nowadays known as Linnaeus' Garden) in the town. He had to modernise the garden but also had to make a new home there, where he and his wife raised a son and several daughters. He was obviously well acquainted with native birds in captivity, and in his zoological lectures he gives many interesting details about the qualities of many native birds as cage birds, obviously based on his own experiences. During the 1740s he also made several major trips to various Swedish provinces. It is interesting to note that Linnaeus writes quite a lot about parrots and other cage birds kept by governors, professors, priests and others that he visited during these provincial tours. In Örebro, for instance, he met with a German-born pharmacist Frantz Michael von Aken in 1746 who bred Canaries *Serinus canaria domestica* and canary mules. In his printed travelogue, Linnaeus from 1747 used several pages to describe not only these hybrids, which fascinated him, but also a kind of care-sheet for keeping canaries. Pharmacist von Aken actually published the first Swedish-language manual of keeping canaries in 1746.

A Small Menagerie

In 1750, at the age of 43, Linnaeus was appointed as Uppsala University's rector. In the 1750s Linnaeus had finally settled down and spent most of his time at his home and at his summer house outside Uppsala. His garden was well-established: he attracted many students not only from Sweden but also from abroad. He had many duties: he was a very active member of the Swedish Academy of Sciences. Linnaeus had an enormous network and corresponded with everyone of importance within the scientific world. At the end of the 1750s he also started to acquire exotic mammals and birds to add to his menagerie. He already had peacocks in his garden and he also tried to keep a raccoon and also obtained various monkeys, lemurs, coati, agouti and other mammals, as well as parrots and other birds.

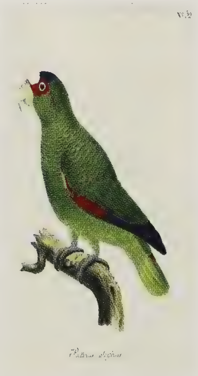


Drawing of Linnaeus' garden from around 1770. "F" indicates the animal house with the aviary, "G" the orangery and "A" Linnaeus's home (Courtesy Swedish National Archives).

Among the birds, his parrots seem to have been the favourite of him and his children, wrote one of Linnaeus' biographers. The first parrot that we hear about is in 1757. It was his Yellow-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua sulphurea*, which he had been given by a lady in Stockholm. It was a very tame specimen which he and his family could handle without any problem.The cockatoo survived for many years. Linnaeus named it *Psittacus cristata*, but the species name was not accepted because it was in doubt which species Linnaeus actually refereed to. It was said that *P. cristata* originated from China, which was part of the confusion. But there is no doubt that Linnaeus actually kept a *C. sulphurea*. Yellow-crested Cockatoos were available to merchants in Canton, hence the confusion; or they were brought back by ships from Canton which also brought back cargo from Batavia on their return trip to Sweden.

Various Parrots in his Care

In the summer of 1759, Linnaeus already had a Blue-fronted Amazon *Amazona aestiva,* a Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao*, and a Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* in his parrot collection. Later we also read about a Blue-headed Pionus *Pionus menstruus* kept by him. It is described as a new species in the 12th edition of his *Systema naturae* (1766). Linnaeus claims that its sound is similar to the Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*.The Blue-fronted Amazon was probably the most common large parrot in Sweden in the eighteenth century, and Linnaeus himself described it several times from his tours around Sweden. Not all species intended for Linnaeus' collection ever made it to Uppsala. There is a report that the Swedish East India Company brought a Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot *Loriculus galgulus* all the way to Gothenburg, where it, because of the time of year, had to stay for a while. It did not survive the winter and therefore Linnaeus never received it alive.



Most Amazon Parrots imported into Sweden in the eighteenth century were the Blue-fronted Amazon Amazona aestiva. However, this picture is of a Central American Amazon *Amazona albifrons* which was obviously kept as a cage bird in Sweden in the 1770s or 1780s. Linnaeus never saw this species. (From Andreas Sparrman, Museum Carlsonianum vol 3, 1788).

His Grey Parrot, which he received from his friend and former student Clas Alströmer (1736–94), was kept chained in the Botanical Garden. It was a very tame specimen and it could imitate the voices of Linnaeus' wife and children. There are many anecdotes about this bird and what it could say, for instance "Blow your nose, Löfberg!". Löfberg was the gardener at Linnaeus' garden. It also said "Mr Carl, it is 12 o'clock!", which was lunch-time in the household. This bird was obviously very entertaining for Linnaeus and his family.

Psittacus vernalis.

Hanging Parrots were occasionally imported into Sweden by the Swedish East India Company in the eighteenth century. One Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot *Loriculus galgulus* was brought to Sweden in 1752 intended for Linnaeus but did not survive the trip all the way to Uppsala. This is a Loriculus vernalis brought to Sweden. (From Andreas Sparrman, Museum Carlsonianum vol 2, 1787).

Linnaeus also received a pair of Scarlet Macaws *Ara macao* from the Royal family. These were of course extraordinarily beautiful birds, although their terrifying cries could frighten everyone that came close. Linnaeus obviously had several specimens and they lived very long lives in his care. They were alive still in 1776 and obviously at least one survived him when he himself passed away in 1778. He actually received a further specimen in 1772. Linnaeus wrote a letter to his closest friend Abraham Bäck (1735–1795) that a macaw had arrived by itself at his garden and joined the pair he already had. Linnaeus understood that the macaw had come all the way from the Royal Castle at Drottningholm outside Stockholm, a distance of about 75 kilometres. However, the King was willing to donate the macaw to Linnaeus, but he did not accept it. It was obviously too expensive to feed and keep the birds so he preferred to return the escaped macaw to the King.

Other Birds

In the beginning Linnaeus kept his birds in the orangery and at his home. Soon he had too many birds, so a purpose-built bird house was constructed in the garden. During summertime some of the parrots were kept chained on poles or in cages in the garden among the bushes. His bird house was divided into several sections for different species. The bird house was constructed in 1751. A visitor to the garden in 1761 writes that Linnaeus kept Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* in the aviary, obviously referring to Ring-neck Doves *Streptopelia risoria* which were said to originate in India. Also in the aviary was a crane, Common Cranes *Grus grus* were easy to tame. At some point Linnaeus also kept Guinea Fowl *Numida meleagris*, which was introduced into Sweden as late as 1754. Linnaeus had already received them in 1757, but they died and he tried to get replacements, which he obviously did, maybe from the Royal family. A more exotic inhabitant in his bird collection was a Black Curassow *Crax alector*, a rare bird nowadays, but kept here and there in Europe in the eighteenth century or even earlier. Another still uncommon bird at that time were his Muscovy Ducks *Cairina moschata*. Linnaeus appreciated their scent, and a visitor wrote that their plumage was white in colour.

One peculiar Swedish custom, of which there are several evidences from the vicinity of Stockholm in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was the keeping of cock Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix* in small cages as so-called "play birds", for instances in Inns but also in many homes. The displaying Black Grouse cocks were reported to be very amusing as cage birds. Linnaeus also had them in his garden, already mentioning them in 1755. According to a letter from 1761, Carl Linnaeus tried to trade a couple of Black Grouse for a "blue parrot" of unknown species with the famous Dutch animal dealer company Blauw Jan "Blue John" in Kloveniersburgwal, Amsterdam.

Some birds survived in Linnaeus' care for only a short time, others obviously lived for years, sometimes for decades in the Botanical Gardens. Linnaeus continued to receive birds for his collection until the very end. As late as 1776 he received three Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* from the Swedish King Gustav III. In a letter a few months later he mentioned only two specimens, one had obviously passed away.

Most birds were kept to be studied but also for amusement. However, peafowl (some white ones) were obviously bred in large numbers and Linnaeus could therefore make some profit by selling them or giving them as gifts to larger estates in the vicinity. Also Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* were raised in the Botanical Gardens and were redistributed by Linnaeus' successors to castles and larger estates that had ponds in their parks.

The Helmeted Cassowary

Another bird that Linnaeus received very late in his life was a Helmeted Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*, a very exotic giant bird that Royals all over Europe had kept since the early seventeenth century when it was possible to important them alive from the trading port of Seram in south-east Asia. Linnaeus got the bird as a gift from the Dowager-Queen Louisa Ulrika. The university paid extra money to Linnaeus so he could feed and keep the large bird. This big bird is not easy to keep and it can be dangerous for its keepers. However, the cassowary survived Linnaeus who died in 1778 and he was succeeded by his son Carl Linnaeus the younger. The bird was still alive in 1783, but died in the spring of that year. Carl had acquired an Ostrich *Struthio camelus* and the two birds did not get along and were always fighting with each other. Linnaeus' two Scarlet Macaws also survived him and were still alive in the 1780s. However his son was not successful in keeping the bird collection and could not acquire new specimens. He did not have his father's network, neither his status, nor friends to provide him with new birds. His son Carl was actually very interested in the keeping of zoo animals, but he was not fortunate enough to live very long and died in 1783. His father's bird collection was at that time almost gone. Maybe one of the macaws lived longer than him. Carl-Peter Thunberg, who now became professor, did not have the same interest in keeping birds, although a few birds were kept there. In 1802 there was still a parrot in the academy Botanical Garden, a small reminder of Linnaeus' once famous menagerie kept in Uppsala.

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NEWS FROM LORO PARQUE FUNDACIÓN, MAY 2016

By Dr. Juan Cornejo, Bird Curator, Loro Parque Fundación, Tenerife

The breeding season in the Breeding Centre at Loro Parque Fundación is advancing at a good pace and this year there are already more than 350 chicks ringed.

The Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor* is one of the species that we regularly breed here. It is a species that is easy to keep and widely kept in captivity, but in the wild the situation gets alarmingly worse. It is called the Swift Parrot because it nests on the island of Tasmania, in the south of Australia, but out of the nesting season it migrates up to 5000 km to find its favourite feeding sites in the south-east of the Australian continent. The main threats to the parakeets are the destruction of their Eucalyptus forest habitat for timber and, discovered by researchers of the National University of Australia, supported by Loro Parque Fundación, predation by Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps*. These small native Australian mammals were introduced into Tasmania in the XIX century and have a very high impact on the parakeets during their breeding season. They can predate up to 80% of nests, with the result not only of the loss of eggs and chicks, but in many cases also the death of the females. At present there are barely 2000 adult parakeets in the wild and a recent study estimates that, if it continues this way, the population is going to decrease by 95% in the next 12 - 18 years, which inevitably would lead them to extinction. To avoid this, the species has been reclassified as critically endangered and the Australian government is taking actions to protect the habitat and to reduce the impact of the Sugar Gliders.

Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*

At the end of the month I took part at the mid-year meeting of the Parrot Taxonomic Advisory Group of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), which took place in Lagos, Portugal. There, diverse aspects of management were discussed, such as different options to reduce aggression among cockatoos, or alternatives to create more space in zoos for the reproduction of the most threatened amazons.

The situation of the Grey-breasted Parakeet *Pyrrhura griseipectus* was also discussed. It is a species in critical danger of extinction whose wild population in 2016 was 314, counted at the roosting sites; a stable population but very precarious. The census is one among various elements of the conservation project that is mainly supported by Loro Parque Fundación, and carried out by the Brazilian NGO, Aquasis. The population in captivity is ironically much bigger and could play an important role in the recuperation of the species. To achieve this, the most important actions are to protect their habitat and to stop the capture they are suffering. Once this is achieved, a possible conservation strategy could be the release of individuals reared in captivity to boost the remaining populations, or to create them again where they have been exterminated.

Grey-breasted Parakeet *Pyrrhura griseipectus*

But in putting forward something like this, it is necessary to keep the population in captivity pure, and to preserve its genetic diversity. The best way to attain this is by creating a studbook, a genealogical register that permits analysis of the population, to monitor it and to determine the best pairings. Studbooks are the usual tool of zoos for managing threatened species, but in this case just a few zoos keep this species and, to reach the target the participation of the largest possible number of private breeders who keep this species is essential. I encourage all breeders keeping this species to join in this effort by taking part in the Studbook. Pau Puigcerver, Assistant of Curator at Loro Parque, is the person in charge of coordinating this Studbook. Please, contact Pau if you are interested in participating ast@loroparque-fundacion.org.

OBITUARY - ALAN VAUGHAN GRIFFITHS

By Russell Jones

I am sad to report the death of Alan Vaughan Griffiths. Alan passed away peacefully at home on the 2nd of January aged 88 years after being unwell for quite a while. He was a long standing member of the society having served on the Council for a number of years.

Alan's interest in birds and the natural world in general started at quite early in life. At the age of ten he started keeping birds in the family home, he also kept pet mice which he had to hide on the top of his wardrobe in his bedroom to avoid detection.

After school, Alan gained entry to the Royal Veterinary College, London. Upon qualifying he returned to Llandysul and joined the local veterinary practice. It was primarily a large animal practice.

During his time in London Alan became acquainted with Raymond Sawyer. He would often recount visits to Raymond's home in London. He recalled that Raymond had kept and bred Roulroul Partridge *Rollulus rouloul* in a small indoor aviary along with other species which sadly now are no longer available. He became a member of the Avicultural Society in 1953 and also the British Aviculturists Club.

His interest initially was in seedeaters and softbills although he progressed to keeping a large collection of parrots. He was awarded the AS medal for the first breeding of the Pallid Munia *Lonchura pallida* in 1984, a species which he also kept later on in life after finding some at a dealer in the Netherlands, and also for breeding the Blue-eyed Cockatoo *Cacatua opthalmica* in 1964. He achieved regular success with many species of macaws, amazons and cockatoos, his Leadbeater's *Lophochroa leadbeateri* reproducing particularly well. He always had a special interest in the cockatoo family.

He maintained a large and varied collection for many years, ranging from the diminutive Gold-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava* to Demioselle Cranes *Grus virgo*, which graced the lawn. He also kept various small mammals, including Roborovski Hamsters *Phodopus roborovskii*, which would escape and turn up in the most unusual locations around the house.

I first met Alan at a meeting of our local cage bird society in the early 90s, and shortly afterwards, I was invited to visit his collection. For a young aviculturist this was quite an eye opener: many aviaries containing macaws, amazons, pionus and rare cockatoos that I had only previously seen in books. Alan also maintained and bred from an impressive collection of lories and lorikeets including the Red-collared Lorikeet *Trichoglossus* *rubritorquis* which at that time were fairly scarce, along with various Australian and Asian parakeets. There were also pairs of Triangular-spotted Pigeons *Columba guinea*, Sonnerat's Junglefowl *Gallus sonneratii* and various softbills. He very kindly gave me a pair of Vinous-throated Parrotbills *Sinosuthora webbiana* which sparked my own interest in softbills.

Alan also had an interest in plants, particularly half-hardy tropical plants and he would often return from his regular trips to Cornwall with various different species.

I was fortunate to work for Alan for a short while, feeding and carrying out general maintenance duties. It was during this time that he introduced me to the Avicultural Society. We would regularly attend social events, particularly enjoying the annual garden parties at Raymond's.

I can recall an occasion when we once heard a Pekin Robin *Leiothrix lutea* calling from a tree in the woodland adjacent to the house. Upon checking the aviary, it was apparent that the resident pair were still in the aviary. We duly set up a trap cage baited with mealworms and captured the feral bird, still to this day having no idea where it came from.

There were very few species of birds which Alan had not kept at some time in his life. He had a wide knowledge of birds, aviculture and natural history in general, keeping a diary of notable events such as hearing the first cuckoo, chiffchaff or curlew. There were very few people in the world of aviculture that Alan didn't know.

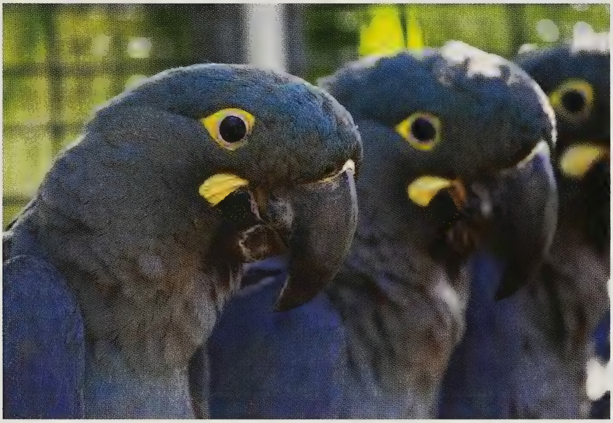
He also enjoyed travelling, with trips to Australia, New Guinea and South America usually on board a cruise ship as he wasn't very keen on travelling by air.

Fortunately, Alan's daughter and her husband took over the running of the collection when in later life Alan became unable to look after it by himself, and still maintain an impressive collection of parrots.

Those of us who have been lucky enough to know Alan will remember him as quite a character even until the end. I will always have fond memories of our many trips to the Avicultural Society social events.

LORO PARQUE SENDS NINE LEAR'S MACAWS *Anodorhynchus leari* BACK TO BRAZIL

Loro Parque Fundación has recently achieved a new international success in its conservation and protection of wildlife. This week nine specimens of Lear's Macaw, hatched and reared in Tenerife, were shipped to its native Brazil to be reunited with others of their species. It is the most significant repatriation ever made to Brazil of these critically endangered macaws thanks to Loro Parque Fundación's breeding centre, after ten years of participation in an international programme for their preservation. On February 24th the specimens will be welcomed by Foz de Iguaçu, the birds' park's technical manager, Dr. Yara Barros, accompanied by Juan Villalba-Macías, coordinator of Bioparque M'Boricuá and also a member of the Loro Parque Fundación.



Lear's Macaws

This initiative started in 2006 as a result of a request from the Government of Brazil to Loro Parque to bring its expertise in breeding and conservation of this species. Loro Parque Fundación was chosen for this project due to its other notable successes in other rearing projects, in particular with Spix's Macaws *Cyanopsitta spixii*. In 2001, this species became extinct in the wild and it survives in captivity thanks to the conservation programme initiated in 1990 in which Loro Parque Fundación had a key role, successfully breeding this species and contributing $726,000 to the programme in Brazil.

Responding to the request, Loro Parque Fundación received four Lear's Macaw specimens from the Brazilian Government in 2006 and, during the next decade, the foundation was able to breed 36 young. This marks the highest breeding rate for this species worldwide. Furthermore, Loro Parque Fundación supports local awarenessraising actions among communities of this bird's natural habitat, having invested $387,000 in this conservation project. Loro Parque Fundación's significant participation in this international project has allowed for this species' population growth in the wild, a count of 1,200 Lear's Macaws now, compared to 242 specimens registered in 2001. This success has been acknowledged by the International Union for Conservation of Nature who saw fit to make a decision to lower this species' threat level from critically endangered to endangered.

Lear's Macaw outside a nest hole

Regarding Spix' Macaws, Loro Parque Fundación first returned in 1997, all specimens' ownership in its facilities to the Brazilian Government. Finally, in 2002, the foundation shipped all of the specimens at its disposal to Brazil, thus allowing the organisations like Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources or Chico Mendes Institute for Conservation of Biodiversity to take advantage of Loro Parque's expertise in 'blue macaw' breeding to reintroduce this species to its natural habitat.

Since 1994, this foundation has concentrated its work in protecting the environment through international projects. In South America alone, Loro Parque Fundación participates in 58 projects, having invested $6,409,005 up until now. The focus of its activity are based on rescue, conservation and investigation, as well as carrying out education campaigns to raise awareness about threats to biodiversity.

NEWS & VIEWS

BIRD RINGING AT BEALE PARK

Beale Park, at Lower Basildon in Hampshire, first started to be used as a ringing site in 1999 when a group of ringers explored the varied habitats around the grounds. In the beginning, visits were made every weekend as the then trainer, Alan Martin, used the site to train a group of people from around the area. In the intervening years a number people have attained various levels of expertise, including the Park Curator Dave Coles. Because of the variety of habitats at Beale Park the number of species caught and ringed has been quite varied, ranging from Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* to Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*. Overall 78 species have been ringed and in September 2015 the 10,000th bird was ringed which was a Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita.*

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CRANES IN AUSTRALIA

One of the avian delights of spending time in parts of northern Australia is the sight of small groups of Brolga *Grus rubicunda*. In the late 1970s there had been the occasional sighting of the Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* a superficially similar species, after first being recorded in October 1966. In the intervening years the population has now become fairly well established, although in fairly low numbers, in certain areas of the north.

A study trying to discover their movements between wet and dry seasons is currently being undertaken and will hopefully provide some answers. Breeding populations of both species occur in different areas but there are already signs of some hybridisation, with at least one bird having intermediate plumage being observed.

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CRESTED PIGEON *Ocyphaps lophotes*

It is good to see that after many years with a low population in captivity in the UK, the Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* is now being seen and bred in more and more collections. This species was once thought to be a specialist of the drier regions in its homeland of Australia but, according to recent reports, has increased its distribution of the 1850s to being common throughout most of the mainland.

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DICLOFENAC BANNED IN IRAN

Iran's Department of Environment has officially banned the export, import, production and veterinary use of the drug diclofenac in the country.

Diclofenac is a non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug whose veterinary use as a painkiller for livestock has been the main cause of the decline of several species of vultures around the world. Vultures are scavengers, often referred to as nature's "garbage collectors", meaning that they feast on rotting carcasses keeping the environment free from disease. Unfortunately, vultures that feed on animal carcasses recently treated with diclofenac die from renal failure within a few days.

Iran is one of the last remaining major strongholds in the Middle East for the rapidly declining and endangered Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*. The complete ban of diclofenac by the Iranian government will reinforce the on-going international battle to prevent the extinction of vultures and other birds of prey in the region.

Diclofenac has been a major cause of concern in many parts of the world. In South Asia, the populations of three species of vultures, the White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus*, and Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris,* have declined by more than 99% since the 1990s due to the wide veterinary use of diclofenac. However, following a public campaign from the BirdLife Partnership, veterinary diclofenac was completely banned in India, Nepal and Pakistan in 2006. As a result, vulture populations have begun to stabilise, although their levels remain low and vulnerable.

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GREY-BREASTED PARAKEET *Pyrrhura griseipectus*

A third population of the critically endangered Grey-breasted Parakeet *Pyrrhura griseipectus* has been found in Brazil. Researchers in the Ceará state of north-east Brazil made a discovery that provides some hope to bird conservationists around the world: five critically-endangered Grey-breasted Parakeets, (also known as the Grey-breasted Conure) were found. These five birds were in an isolated mountain above the Caatinga and have become the third known population of these birds. According to BirdLife, there are only around 30 to 300 adult Grey-breasted Parakeets (not counting the chicks) in the wild, a population ravaged by two familiar culprits: trapping and habitat loss. The two main populations reside in Serra do Baturité and Quixadá.

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NEW INITIATIVES FOR CONSERVING AFRICAN GREY PARROTS *Psittacus erithacus*

The Lukuru Foundation is a non-profit organisation based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with a long-established history in the country. One of Lukuru's focus efforts is the TL2 region of DRC, this landscape is known by three principal rivers, the Tshuapa, the Lomami, and the Congo River, known here as the Lualaba, giving the region its name: TL2. The Tshuapa and Lualaba are its western and eastern borders; the Lomani River flows through its centre. This region covers over 40,000 km² and is one of the largest blocks of intact forest in DRCongo. It has low human population densities and little immigration, a remote forest tract in the central provinces of Maniema, Orientale, and Kasai Orientale. Drs. Terese and John Hart are the project director and scientific director, respectively.

A vulnerable species in TL2 that has recently come to the Hart's attention is the African Grey Parrot. The DRC contains a major portion of the its range and they have long been exploited for the live animal trade. However their current CITES Appendix II status and management of the AGP trade in DRC have not led to control of captures and trade. Pilot studies conducted by John and his field team in 2013 in Maniema and Orientale provinces support other anecdotal evidence that AGP populations are decreasing and are being trapped in numbers that far exceed the DRC national quota. The situation for African Greys, as it relates to trade is quite urgent—TL2 in particular is a parrot collection frontier, and could see a rapid upsurge in wild bird trappings as more collectors converge on the province's two main export cities, Kindu and Kisangani.

The Lukuru Foundation is working to establish a number of initiatives in the region. In addition to understanding the dynamics of the trade, baseline conditions of parrot numbers need to be established. They will work to develop a monitoring protocol and gain an overview of their ecology as it relates to their vulnerability to exploitation, as well as engaging with local communities and regional authorities to provide enforcement of existing regulations. Information collected through these initiatives will form an integral part of the effort to work with CITES to end global demands for the parrots via the wild bird trade.

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SWIFT GIVEN LIFE SAVING OPERATION

Veterinary surgeons have successfully transplanted primary feathers onto a common swift *Apus apus*. The patient was found fluttering inside a house in Tel Aviv and had sustained a number of broken feathers. Vets transplanted the corresponding feathers from a dead swift, fitted with carbon fibre, in an operation lasting two hours. The process is known as imping. Imping is the process of re-attaching donor feathers onto a bird's wings by the use of small splints inserted into the hollow shaft of the bird's main flight feathers (primaries and secondaries). It restores flight immediately and is also invaluable in preventing broken blood feathers during a clipped bird's moulting period. Imped feathers will of course also be moulted out and replaced eventually, as though they were the bird's normal feathers. In most cases, imping is carried out by a specialist avian vet. Donor feathers, preferably of the same species, will be needed to match up with those the bird requires. Imping does not directly affect any live tissue. The Israeli swift turned out to need six new feathers in its left wing and one in its right wing. After a series of training flights, the bird was released successfully.

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SOUTH KOREA TO PROTECT SAFE-HAVEN FOR MIGRATING SHOREBIRDS

BirdLife International and the Government of Seocheon County have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding on the conservation of the Geum Estuary in the Republic of Korea.

The MoU was signed by Mr Pakrae Noh, the Governor of Seocheon County, and Patricia Zurita, BirdLife's Chief Executive at the BirdLife office in Cambridge, UK on 9 November 2015.

Through the MoU, BirdLife and Seocheon County have agreed to work together to safeguard the biodiversity of the Geum Estuary. The county government has pursued enlightened policies based around nature-based sustainable development. The BirdLife Partnership will support this through the provision of technical expertise on migratory bird conservation.

The Geum Estuary is now the most important wetland in the Republic of Korea for migrating shorebirds, following the reclamation of the extensive mudflats at nearby Saemangeum. It supports internationally important numbers of 16 shorebird species, including the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus.*

The Geum Estuary is of outstanding importance for Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* and Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*. These species have both been upgraded from Vulnerable to Endangered on the 2015 Red List because of the rapid loss of the intertidal wetlands in the Yellow Sea region of East Asia which they rely on to refuel on their long migrations from the breeding grounds in Eastern Russia to South-East Asia and Australasia.

In addition to its rich wetlands and biodiversity, Seocheon County has a distinctive local cuisine, in particular excellent seafood and the best rice wine in Korea, and a rural village lifestyle. BirdLife is working with the government to developing nature and culture based tourism in the county.

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VEGA GULL SEEN IN WEXFORD

Western Palaearctic's first recorded Vega Gull *Larus vegae* was sighted at Duncannon, Wexford on 10th January 2016. This Herring Gull-like bird is variously treated as a separate species or as a subspecies of the American Herring Gull.

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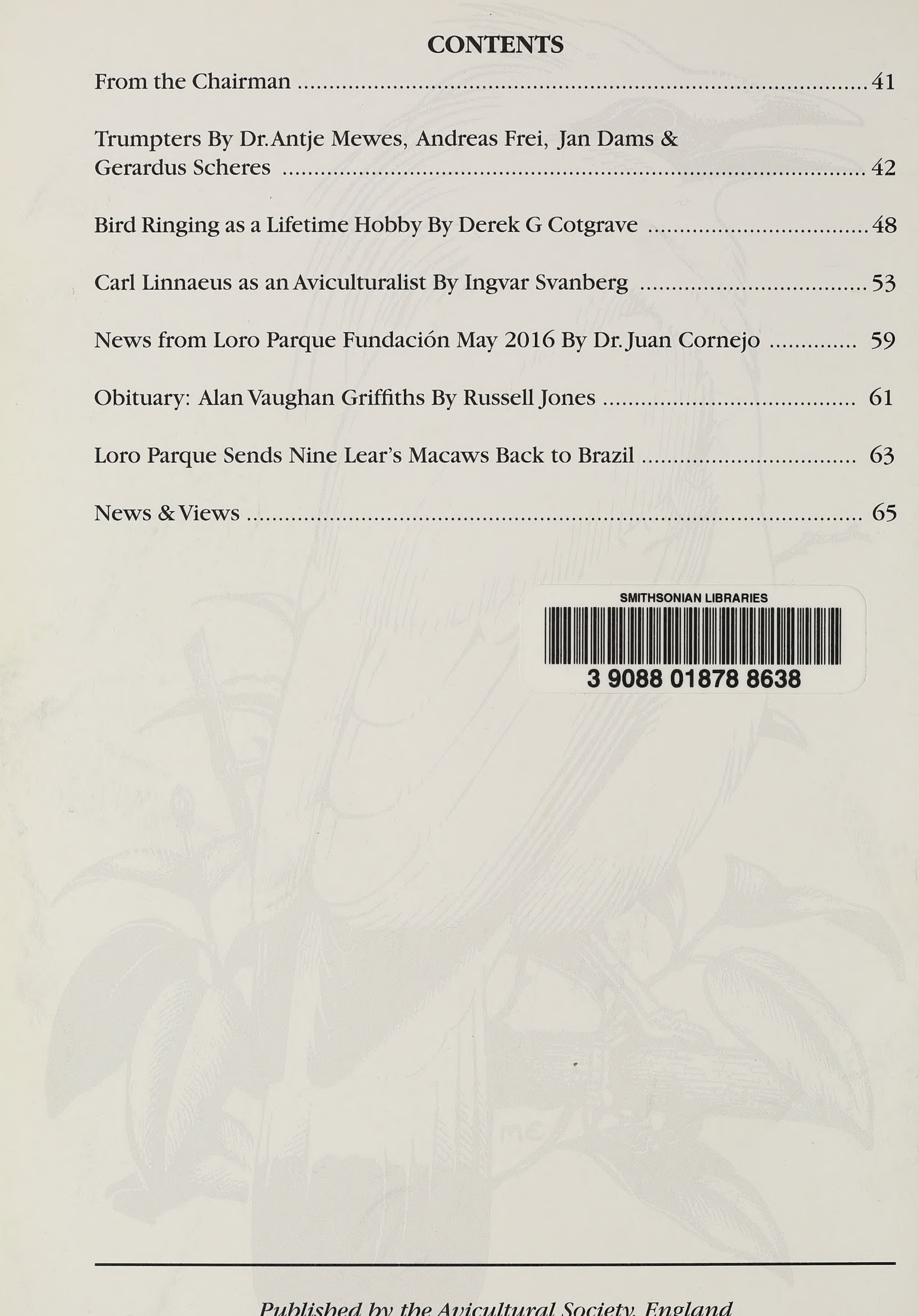

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